

Revue RECERC :

La coopération transfrontalière en Europe : au-delà des cicatrices de l'Histoire
Cross-border Cooperation in Europe: Beyond the Scars of History

Introduction

Martine Camiade, Professor in Catalan Studies in University of Perpignan

Birte Wassenberg, Professor in Contemporary History in IEP of Strasbourg

This special issue of RECERC, an electronic journal of the Franco-Catalan Transfrontalier Institute, was born from the reflections carried out within the framework of the TEIN (Transfrontier Euro-Institute Network) network on cross-border cooperation, history of cross-border relations.

Founded in 2010, it brings together 13 partners from nine border regions in France, Germany, Switzerland, Austria, Italy, Slovenia, Poland, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Belgium, Spain, the French West Indies, the United Kingdom and Ireland. The special feature of TEIN is that it is made up of university training and research units as well as research institutes and training centers for the practical activity of cross-border cooperation in Europe.

The members involved in the TEIN are real players in this cross-border cooperation. Their work includes training and assistance in cross-border and cross-border project management. It also proposes support, training and advice for cross-border actors and research on cross-border cooperation. In this sense TEIN can be considered as representing a true bottom-up approach, that is to say a bottom-up approach.

The basic principle of cross-border cooperation is to establish tied spaces in frontier territories in order to find common solutions to similar problems. This cooperation demonstrates the need to ensure that the identities of these cross-border areas are sustained, but also the need to ensure that the process of European integration benefits from the dynamism of local and regional authorities on both sides of a border which try to develop together a real partnership, a true synergy and a solidarity, just like a united and diverse Europe from the regions.

However, it is the seal of history that marks the specificity and originality of frontier spaces. In the course of time, they were entrusted with functions that were no longer military but more and more sectorial. Some frontier regions have tipped over historical events in a particular national territory, maintaining in their structures significant peculiarities resulting from the instability of the frontier layout and thus different from the inland regions. This unique history and structures have shaped original behavior towards the frontier and border areas in most of the old and new border regions of central and eastern Europe as well as western Europe and what makes it complex and specific border problem across Europe.

Each border region has its peculiarities. Some border areas for religious, economic, cultural and political reasons convey more the notion of difference than the notion of resemblance in the mental representations of their inhabitants, hence the difficulties of approaching cross-border spaces.

This special issue of RECERC reflects these historical factors and markers, the evolution of cross-border cooperation. The title "Cross-border Cooperation in Europe: Beyond the Scars of History" refers to the key object of our study: the frontier. At the beginning of the 1970s, Alfred Mozer, a Socialist deputy in Germany, was one of the pioneers in cross-border cooperation in the German-Dutch Euregio area in Gronau, which refers to the border in Europe as scar of history and which designates cross-border cooperation as a solution to "cure this scar". By focusing on this dimension of the border, the cross-border cooperation approach can acquire an unprecedented historical depth, but necessary in order to understand conflicts and co-operation in European border regions. Such an historical approach also makes it possible to highlight the commonalities between cross-border cooperation and the European integration process, namely the objective of overcoming borders in Europe in order to maintain peace. Bringing people closer together means supporting European reconciliation, a necessary step after 1945 to establish the necessary conditions for both cross-border cooperation and European integration. Cross-border cooperation is thus a "bottom-up" process that complements the "top-down" process of the founding fathers of the European Economic Community (EEC).

The articles in this special edition are divided into three parts, each taking into account a particular aspect of this "bottom-up" process of cross-border cooperation. The first part thus focuses more specifically on the notion of the frontier as a "scar of history" and the function of cross-border cooperation as contributing to the reconciliation of European peoples. Jean Peyrony, in his article on "The catastrophe of 1914/1918: an 'unnecessary sacrifice'. The nation-state and its borders "give us from the start a key to the apprehension of the mental borders that still exist between European nations and which are sustained by the way in which the memory of the Great War is celebrated in Europe. European cross-border cooperation and integration would thus be hampered by the persistent divergence of national accounts of past conflicts. Taking the example of the commemoration of the First World War in France and Germany, it demonstrates how the scarred frontier of history persists and advocates a common approach to European history, an approach that pays tribute to the memory of peace in order to blur these borders and thus facilitate cooperation beyond. Two case studies follow to illustrate how the cross-border cooperation process has helped to overcome the border as a symbol of conflict and pain and thus facilitate the reconciliation of European peoples. Birte Wassenberg, in "The frontier, object of integration or scar of History? The study of the case of the upper Rhine area" shows that Franco-German-Swiss cross-border cooperation was initiated in the 1960s with the aim of transforming the border as a place of separation into a model of cooperation reconciliation or even integration.

The Regio Basiliensis, a cross-border association founded in Basel in 1963, the same year of the signature of the Treaty of Elysium between France and Germany, is a fine example of the complementary function of the reconciliation processes "bottom-up" and "top-down". In his article "The frontier, object of integration or scar of History? The study of the case of the transborder Catalan space", Martine Camiade then analyzes the border of the Pyrenees as object of conflicts during the civil war of Spain and the Second World War. It demonstrates how, through cross-border cooperation in Catalan space, this boundary has been gradually subsided and has become the place of affirmation of a common regional culture. On this Franco-Spanish border there is a small state of Andorra, of Catalan culture but with a history

of its own and particular. Claudine Tarrene reveals the role played by women in international relations.

The second part of the special review is devoted to the examination of identity issues in border regions. Taking the example of Franco-German cooperation in the Upper Rhine area, Hannes Käckmeister does a sociological study of what it means to be German or to be French in a border region where mobility is high. His article "Overcoming the borders of childhood - Cross-border co-operation along the lines of a Franco-German group of experts" chose the example of a binational group of child protection professionals at the border Kehl / Strasbourg to examine how the children of mixed couples in difficult situations (following a divorce, for example) are taken care of by the local authorities on both sides of the border. In particular, it analyzes the cultural, political and mental "boundaries" that exist in the management of this cross-border problem. For his part, Anthony Soares in "Cooperation, Identity and Breakdown at the Irish Border" deals with a more political identity issue arising from the conflict in Northern Ireland. While cross-border cooperation on the border between Northern Ireland and Ireland has helped to ease this conflict and to reconcile border populations, the decision of the Brexit may bring to the surface the dilemma of identity of a northern population tied between the English and Irish affiliations. Re-introducing a political border between the Northern Ireland and Ireland, the Brexit can not only create new obstacles to cross-border cooperation but also recreates the intra-Community gap in a region still traumatized by the EU. violent conflict of the past.

In the third part of the review, the practice of cross-border cooperation is at the heart of the analysis. The article deals with possible approaches and solutions to facilitate cooperation without administrative, political or intercultural obstacles. Joachim Beck proposes the Community legal instrument of the European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) as a possibility for the development of a European network of territorial co-operation (EGTS). create a common cross-border administrative framework. This tool would be appropriate for finding solutions to the institutional problems that still arise in a context marked by the persistence of national administrative borders. For his part, Peter Ulrich made a plea for increasing citizen participation in cross-border spaces. Moving beyond the political frontier and creating a sense of belonging to a shared political space would necessarily involve the invention of a "cross-border democracy".

His article « Can EU cross-border governance be democratic? Some theoretical thoughts on citizen's participation in the European Union » analyzing the possibility for citizen forums to influence the political choices of Interreg operational programs on the spot. His conclusion is not optimistic: he sees little room for citizens to participate actively in the cross-border policy that is framed by the immutable structures of cross-border administrative management. Marek Olszewski and Hynek Böhm come to a more positive conclusion when analyzing the contribution of micro-projects to cross-border cooperation close to citizens. Their article "Microprojects as an efficient cross-border cooperation tool- Example from euroregion Tesin / Cieszyn Silesia in 2007-2013" shows that the specific tool of micro-projects, within the Interreg programs, allows cross-border projects initiated by small project promoters, often citizens' associations, who can thus actively participate in cross-border cooperation. This micro-cooperation also helps to overcome the intercultural boundaries that persist and thus consolidate the process of reconciliation and cross-border integration. Finally, Anne Thevenet,

in her article "On the need to support cooperation actors - experiences of the Upper Rhine", shows how, through the development of a toolkit on cross-border training, the actors in cross-border regions can be accompanied in their efforts to overcome the border and carry out joint projects. This support must necessarily take account of communication and intercultural management data to be considered in the specific context of cross-border territories. Following the example of the Upper Rhine area, it is possible to support the process of reconciliation, co-operation or cross-border integration, and thus help us to heal the borders "the scars of history ".